

Abstract 472

TITLE: California's Neighborhood Intervention Geared to Highrisk Testing (NIGHT) Outreach Program

AUTHORS: Geary, ME; Flores, SM; Rasmussen, HA

ISSUE: Facilitate greater access to HIV testing for highrisk populations in California

SETTING: The Office of AIDS funds 21 local health jurisdictions (LHJs) to support street outreach linked to testing in counties with the highest rates of HIV infection. Target populations include injection drug users (IDUs) and their sex and/or needle sharing partners, other drug and alcohol users, men who have sex with men, sex workers (male, female, transgender) and people of color communities. Outreach and mobile testing occur in venues where the population congregate (streets, bars, parks, etc.).

PROJECT: The program's focus is to reach individuals at highest risk to receive appropriate HIV counseling, testing, followup and referral services. Outreach workers were typically former members of the target population and of the communities in which they work. During encounters, clients were provided with risk assessment and given prevention materials (brochures, safer sex kits and harm reduction kits), along with referrals to other programs for additional assistance. Because many clients contacted as low priority, incentives (food vouchers and phone cards) are given as a method to encourage the client to test.

RESULTS: Mobile testing has greatly increased the ability of outreach workers to reach high risk populations. Thirty-four percent of the clients tested through the NIGHT Program during FY 1997/98 were IDUs and/or their partners. Thirtysix percent of the clients tested through the NIGHT Program during FY 1997/98 were IDUs and/or their partners. Thirtysix percent of clients tested were other substance users and 60% were people of color. Thirtytwo percent of those tested were African American and 23% were Latino. Overall, the positivity rate of NIGHT Program clients exceeded that of the county (i.e., San Diego County's NIGHT Program had a 2.53% positivity rate vs. the county rate of 1.37%). Testing through mobile vans has increased the number of people being tested on the streets (i.e., 60% of the HIV testing in San Mateo County was done through mobile testing which accounted for 65% of the county's positives).

LESSONS LEARNED: Due to the success of the program, it has been expanded and funding has doubled. Program design and data collection has been standardized throughout California to ensure that each agency is providing comparable services.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Harold Rasmussen, Chief

Address: DHS/Office of AIDS, HIV Education and Prevention Services Branch
P.O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320

Fax: (916) 323-4642

E-mail: hrasmuss@dhs.ca.gov